

MOUNT SAN JACINTO STATE PARK

Civilian Conservation Corps Heritage Adventure

Stone Entrance Pillars

You are greeted by CCC construction as you enter Mount San Jacinto State Park: the striking stone pillars flanking the gateway. The entrance area still appears very much the same now as it did when the pillars were completed in 1936. The plaque in the large pillar was placed for the park dedication on June 19, 1937.

Warden's Residence and Park Office

The warden's residence and park office building, located just inside the park entrance to the right, is still used as employee housing but is no longer used as an office. You can see it best from the park entrance drive. The section on the left with dutch doors was originally the park office. The front porch/patio area was a much later addition.

This building was built from the same plans as the Palomar Mountain warden's residence, but with wood columns instead of Palomar's stone. The CCC used standard plans for buildings, stoves, and other structures in many locations, but changed building materials. In keeping with the concepts of park rustic architecture, materials were chosen to fit into the local environment.

Stone Bridge

To view the arch of the stone bridge, take the walkway by the log hauling wagon exhibit, at the edge of the entrance parking area. Next to the log hauling wagon is a granite monument. It commemorates the CCC's work and the park's 50th anniversary, in 1987. As you continue along the picnic trail walkway, you will cross a wooden bridge. Look upstream. The stone bridge you will see is another wonderful example of park rustic architecture. The material and building style make it blend into the surroundings almost like a natural feature.

The picnic area tables and stoves were probably built in the 1940s, post-CCC, using the same style of architecture to blend with the earlier construction. There is an interpretive panel in the picnic area about the work of the CCC in state parks.

Restored Camp Stoves in Campground

The stone walls and steps that make this campground so inviting were built by the CCC. Two camp stoves remain of those built by the Cs. Over 70 years of doing their job had left them in need of a face-lift and some physical therapy. Because California State Parks is committed to protecting the state's natural and cultural resources, specially trained conservators were hired in 2006 to restore the stoves to their 1936 condition. The conservator remortared and replaced stones, repaired internal firebrick, and recreated metalwork with the same hand-forging techniques used by the boys of the Cs. The work was completed in April, 2007. A nifty and unusual feature on these stoves is a griddle that can be slid in place or moved aside.

One restored camp stove is at site 20. The other restored stove is just to the south of the camp host's trailer.

Want to Go Farther?

Take the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway to the station just outside of the upper part of Mt. San Jacinto State Park's wilderness area. From there, it's a 2.2 mile walk (600 foot elevation gain) to the CCC-built Round Valley Ranger Station (pictured at right), a striking stone shed-roof building that has been recently restored by State Parks. If you are up to 3.5 miles (one way) more of hiking with 1700 more feet of elevation gain, ascend to Mt. San Jacinto peak. Near the summit you will find the stone shelter building the CCC constructed for hikers and horseback riders caught in sudden storms. It has also been restored. Note that it was built entirely without mortar!



On the Trail of the CCC

Hike the Campground Periphery Trail

Start: Nature trail trailhead, between the amphitheater and the stone bridge.

Length: approximately 1/2 mile (one-way)

Difficulty: Moderately Easy (mild up and downhill, traverses creek at points)

The Nature Trail traverses the hill behind the campground from the bridge to the far end of the park road. It was originally constructed as a campground access trail, with connector trails leading like spokes into the campsites. Beginning at the stone bridge, the u-shaped trail rises gently as it follows a seasonal stream. When you have gone a short distance up the trail, turn around for an excellent view of the stone bridge arch. As the trail continues, it follows a fence line, wandering downhill to the far end of the campground.

Idyllwild Campground

Nature Trail

Restored
Camp Stove,
Campsite 20

Campsite 20

Campground Host

Restored
Camp Stove

Warden's
Residence

Stone
Bridge

Stone
Entrance
Pillars

Jameson Dr

243

Oakwood St

Pine Crest Ave

Maranatha Dr

Johnson Rd

Oakwood St

243

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